S. Marshak

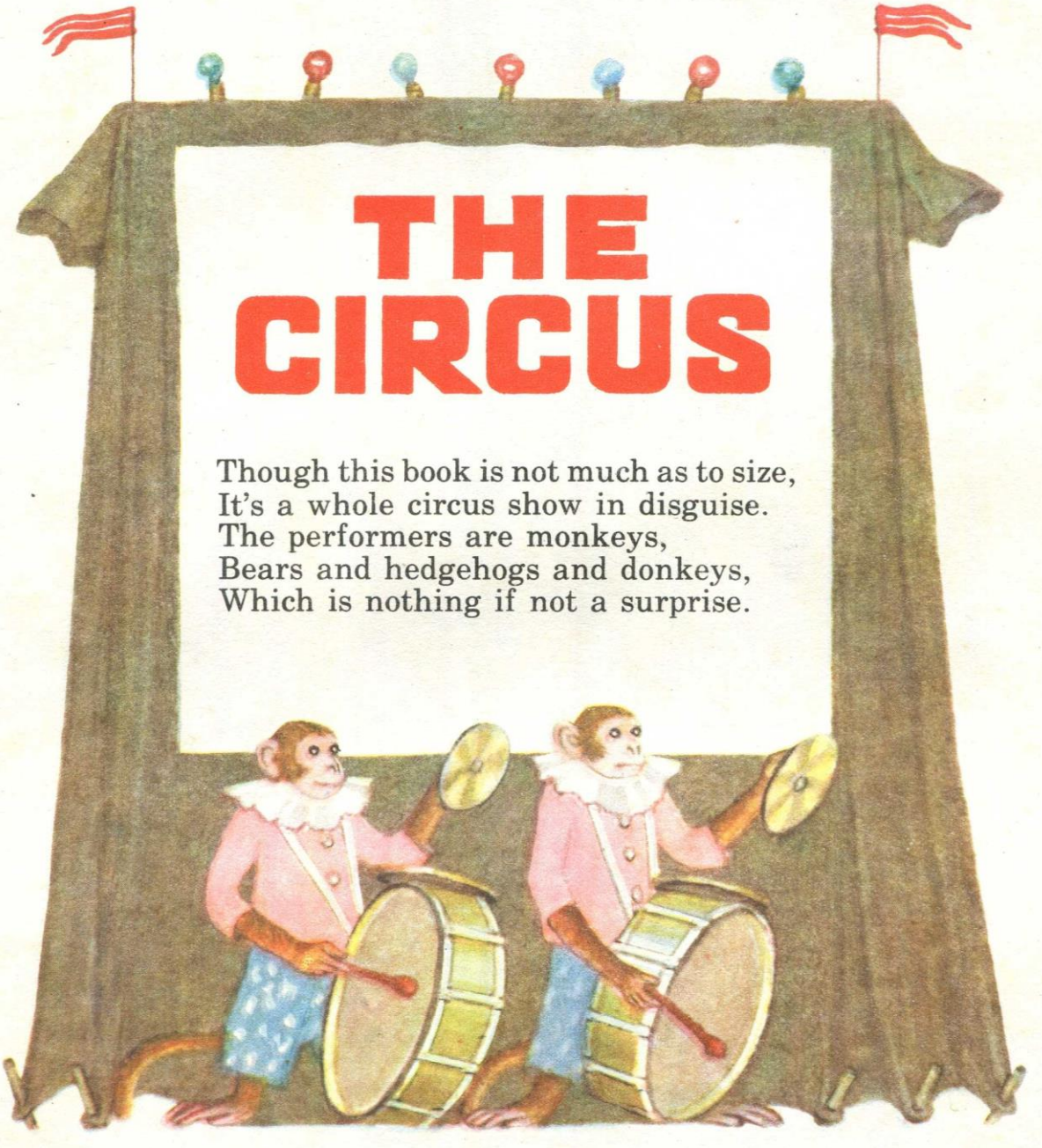
THE CIRCUS

Drawings by V. Lebedev

SAMUIL MARSHAK

THE CIRCUS

Though this book is not much as to size,
It's a whole circus show in disguise.
The performers are monkeys,
Bears and hedgehogs and donkeys,
Which is nothing if not a surprise.



Drawings by V. Lebedev

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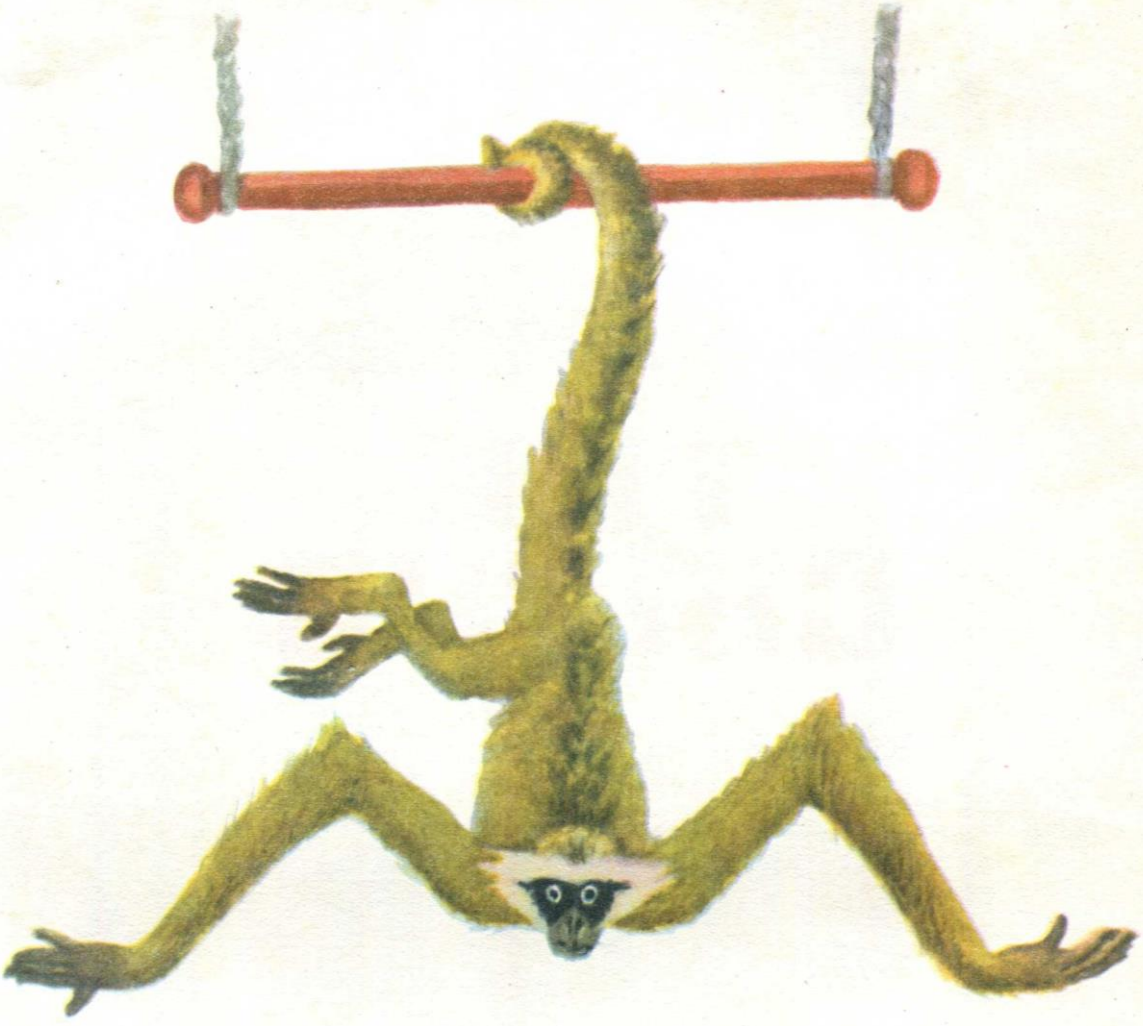
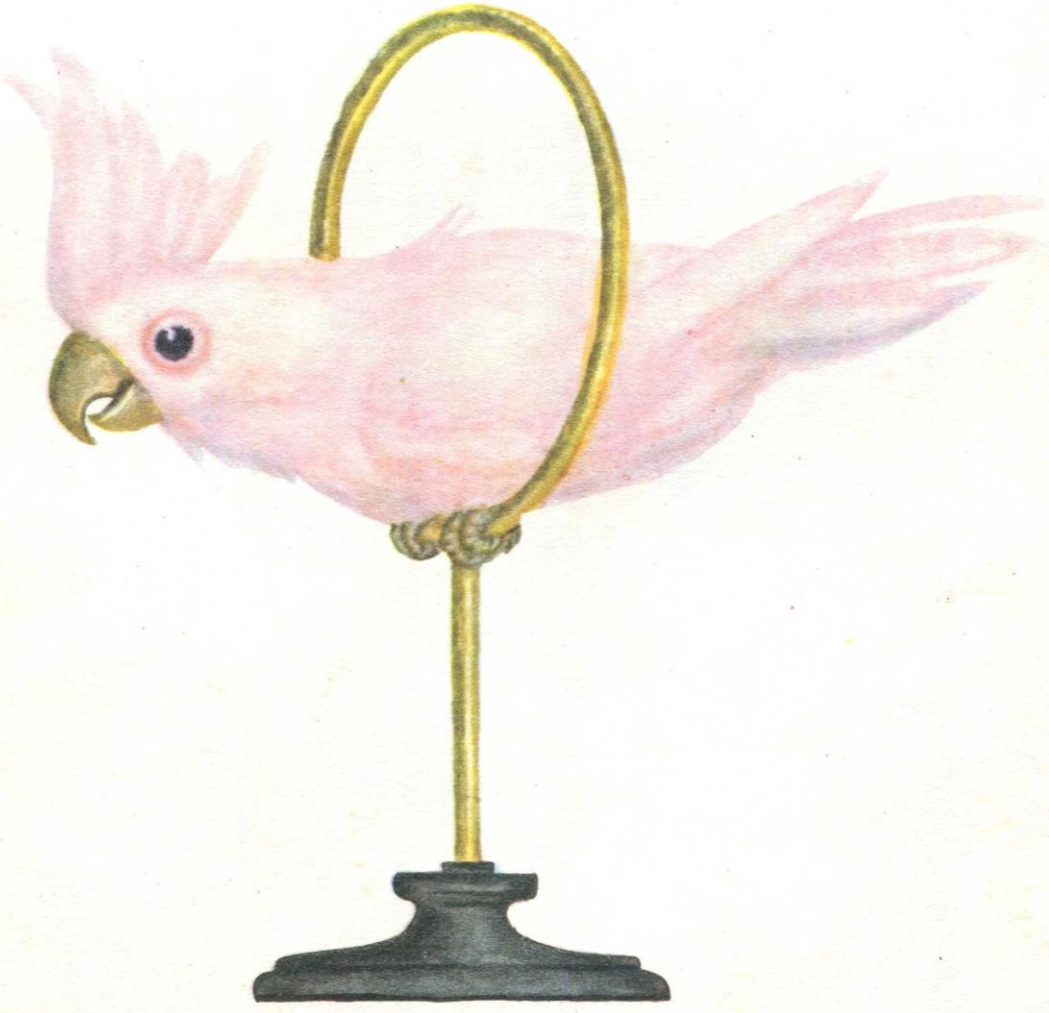
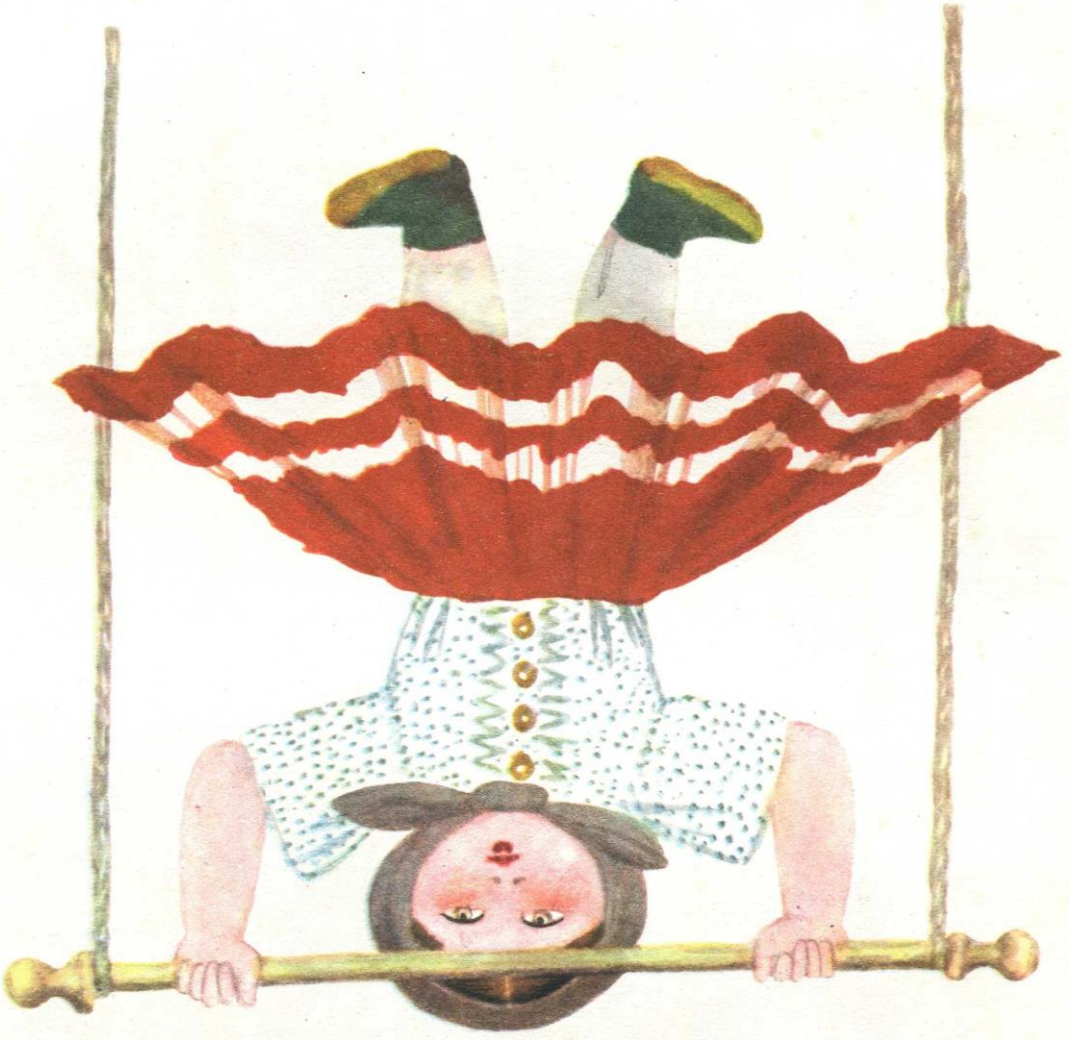


Meet the monkey that hangs on a rail,
Holding on very fast by her tail.
It is longer, it is,
Than our African miss,
This most useful and elegant tail.

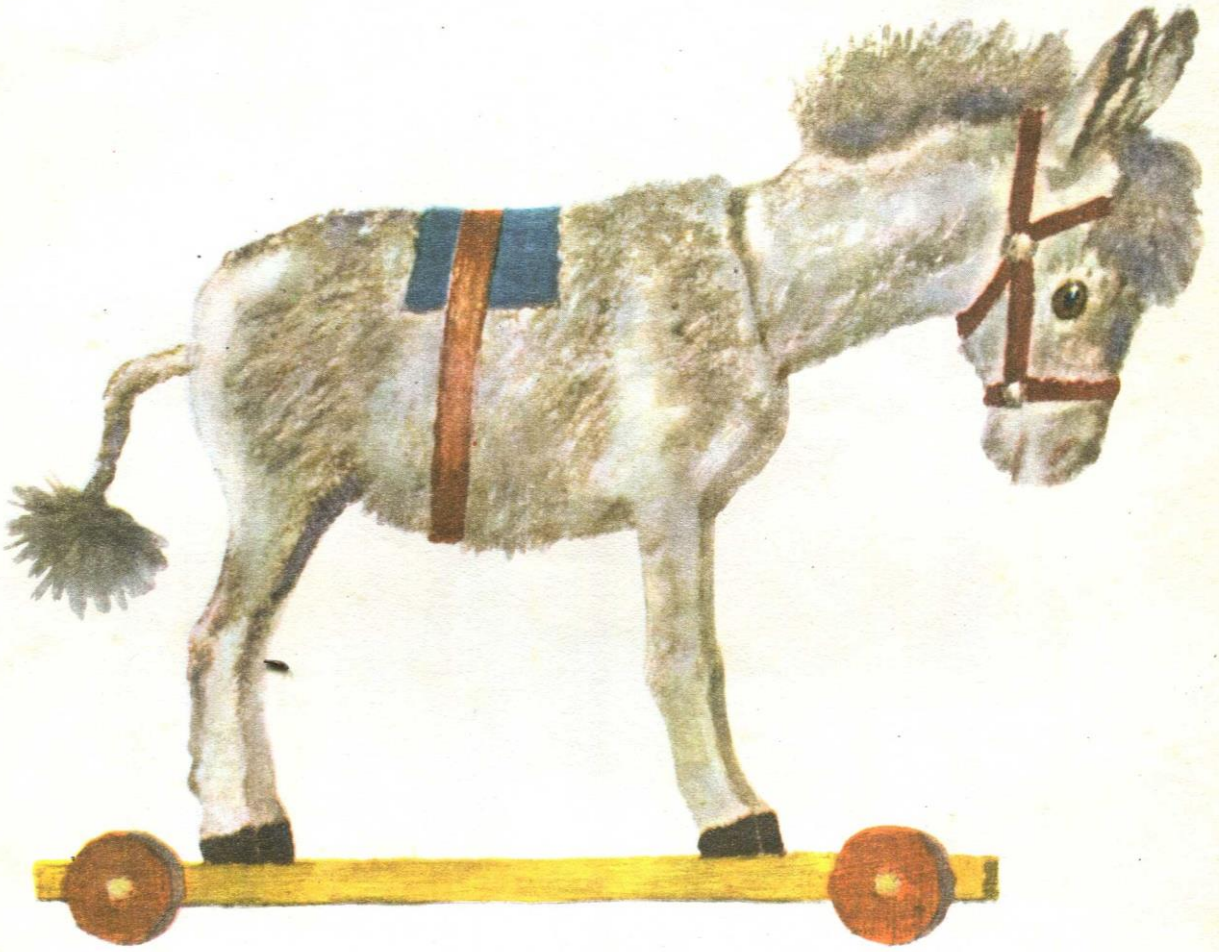
Don't judge Polly, dear friends, too severely;
He's a genius of sorts, pretty nearly.
For unlike other birds
He knows dozens of words
And speaks very distinctly and clearly.



As the puppies come near, he will frown,
Will this furry and lovable clown.
He will miaow, he will hiss,
And you'll know who he is
When he jumps and the stool crashes down.



Here's Matryoshka, for such is her name,
Of both circus and music-hall fame.
  She shows coolness and ease
  On the flying trapeze
And is sure to win world-wide acclaim.

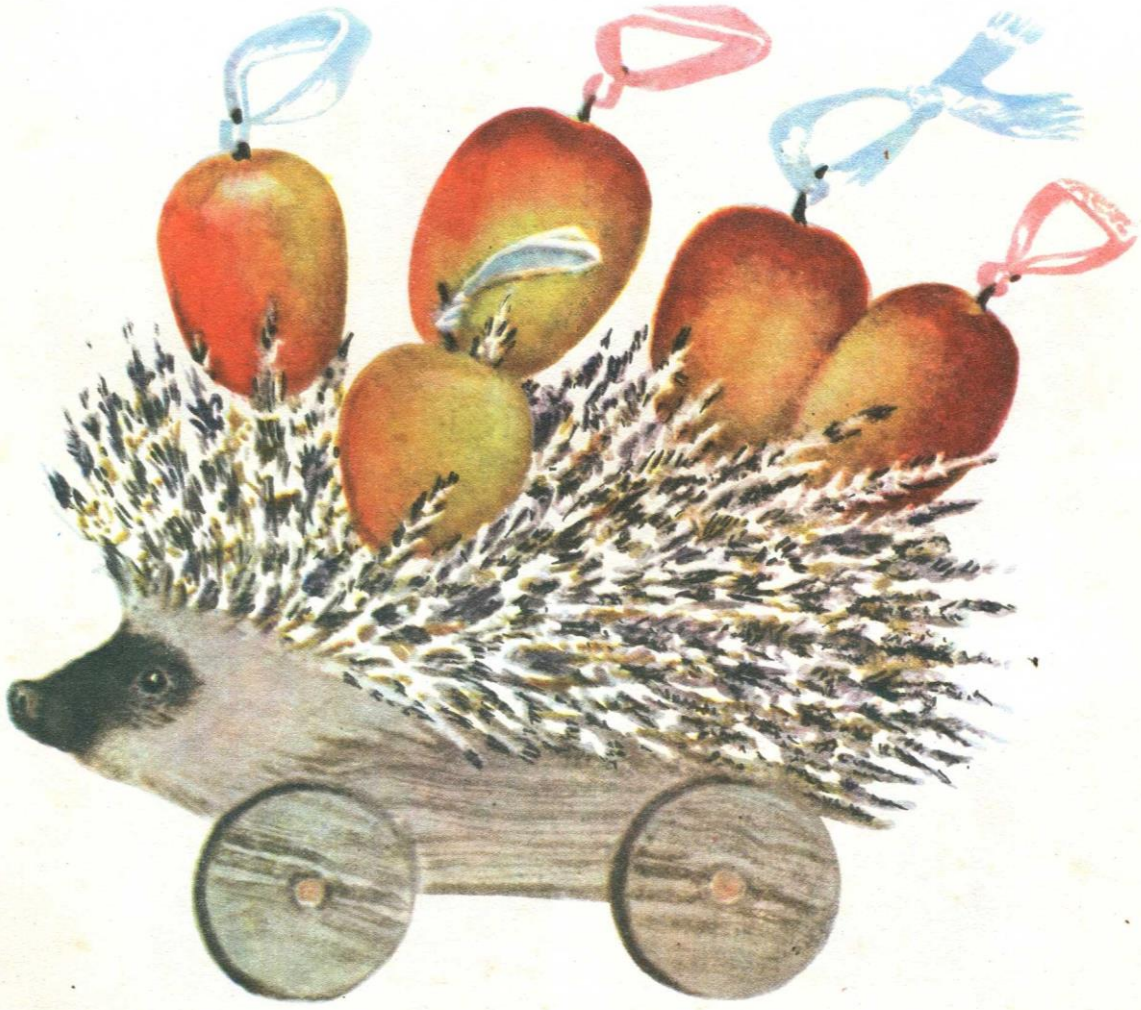


Nodding donkeys are rare, it is said;
As a rule, they are not too well-bred.
But here's one so polite
And so clever and bright
That he greets you by nodding his head.

Mount this horse, and away he will go
Round the ring, not too fast, nor too slow.
But just dare him to try,
And he wind-like will fly
And won't stop till you shout to him "Whoa!"

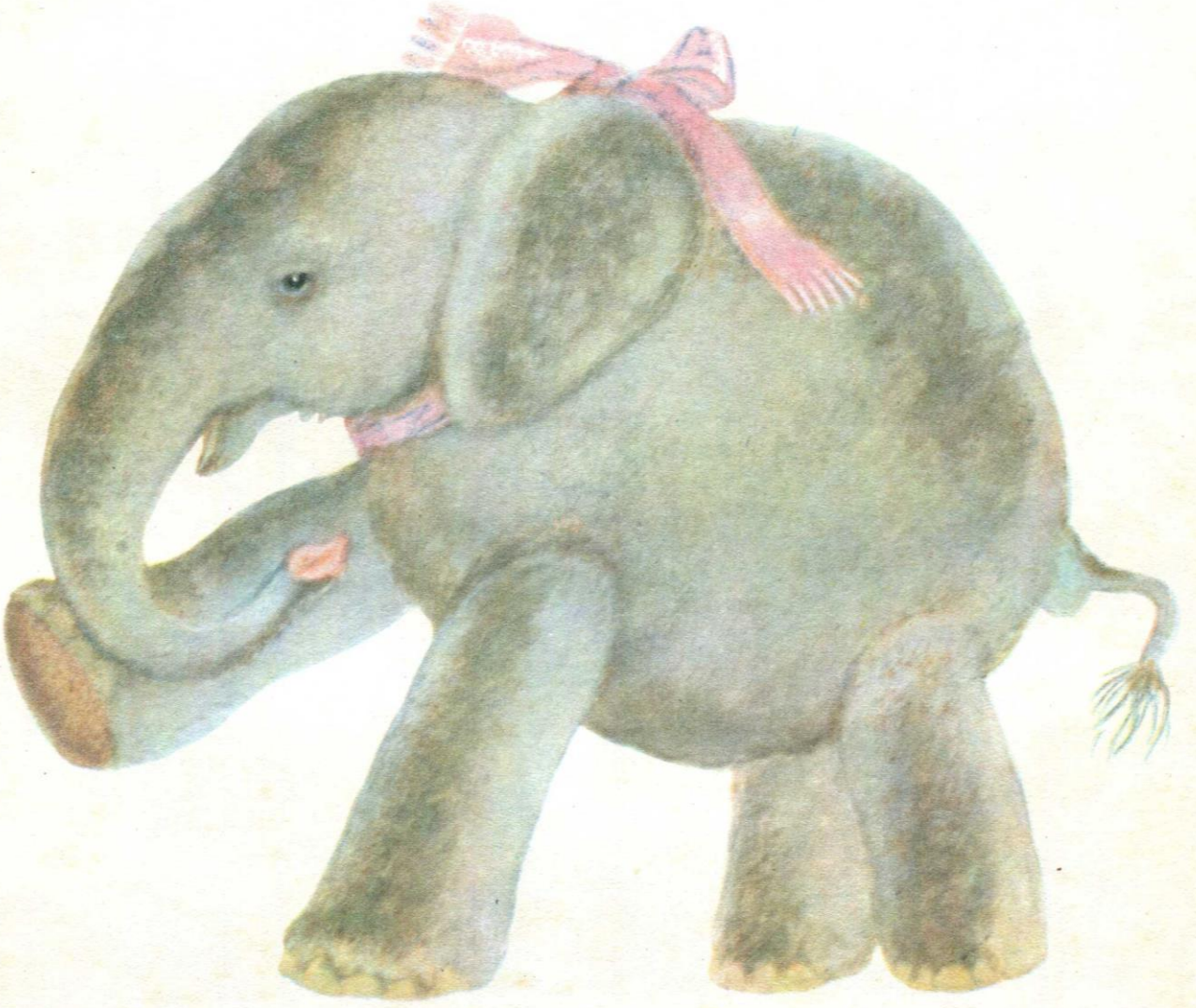
These two acrobats Misha and Fedya,
Though so young, are quite famous already.
Very light on their feet,
Quick and agile and fleet
And accomplished are Misha and Fedya.

Our new juggler is fun when he chooses
To appear in the ring and amuse us.
In the air with his nose
These toy apples he throws
And to catch them his needles he uses.



On the roof of the taxi these two
Pass before you as if in review.
With the poodle at the wheel,
Safe and sure do they feel,
And, dear friends, in their place so would you!

This young elephant's size and his height
Admiration and envy invite.
  Made of sawdust and plush
  And fed mostly on mush,
He's the bulkiest baby in sight.



Watch the frogs and the hares skip and hop,
Jump and leap on the music-box top.
While the goat and his chum
Pound away on the drum,
On they prance as if hating to stop.

Translated from the Russian by Irina Zheleznova

С. МАРШАК
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